

MASON AND DIXON'S LINE.

From the Baltimore Sun.

The Washington Post (1877-1954); Sep 16, 1900; ProQuest Historical Newspapers *The Washington Post* pg. 4

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It Is to Be Resurveyed and the Landmarks Re-established.

From the Baltimore Sun.

As has been noticed in the Sun from time to time, the legislature of Maryland has appropriated a sum of money for the resurvey of Mason and Dixon's line and the restoration of landmarks, many of which have been removed, contrary to scripture. This work has been entrusted to the Maryland geological survey, at the head of which is Prof. William Bullock Clark, of the Johns Hopkins. He has done much important work for the State as geologist and as head of the bureau of highways, and his publications issued from these two departments of the public service rank, perhaps, as high as those of a similar character in this or any other country. The work of restoring Mason and Dixon's line will be done by the State geological commission, in connection with a commission appointed and paid by the State government of Pennsylvania and by the United States Geological Survey. Meetings of these have been held and certain preliminary work has been done.

The original running of Mason and Dixon's line was done according to the terms of the final agreement between the Calverts and Penns. concluded in 1760, after protracted negotiations. There was a conflict in the grants of Maryland and Pennsylvania. The Penns had friends at court and Calvert was finally coerced into conceding everything Penn demanded, and this concession cost him the richest portion of his domain. The line between Maryland and Pennsylvania was begun in 1760 by a commission appointed for that purpose. The proprietors of the two colonies became impatient at their slow progress and agreed to engage Charles Mason and James Dixon to complete the work. Both Penn and Calvert were in London at the time, and they there engaged these two men whose names have become so famous in connection with this historic line, for so many years the dividing line between the free States and the slave States of the Union. While Mason and Dixon are described as mathematicians and surveyors, or merely as surveyors, they were men of learning and of scientific attainments. Both were elected members of the American Philosophical Society. Mr. Mason was at one time assistant at the Royal Observatory at Greenwich. Their work in America included, besides running the line between Maryland and Delaware and Pennsylvania, the measurement of a degree of longitude in Maryland. After returning to England Mason and Dixon were sent to the Cape of Good Hope to observe a transit of Venus. Dixon died in Durham, England, in 1777. Mason came to this country to live in Philadelphia, and died there in 1787.

The two surveyors arrived in Philadelphia November 15, 1764, and began their survey early the following spring. The most difficult part of the survey was in fixing the line of the circle around New Castle, Del., according to Lord Hardwicke's decision. They reported that this line as fixed by them would not pass "one inch to the eastward or westward of the points indicated by the colonial surveyors several years previously," and that "the sighting along poles and the rude chain measurements of 1761 and 1762 would have answered every purpose had the proprietors so thought."

On January 4, 1766, the party had crossed North Mountain, in Washington County, and had reached the Little Allegany. There they quit work because of the fear of Indians. The French and Indian war was going on, but the surveying party had been protected by the escort of a body of friendly Indians of the Six Nations. When they reached a point 24 miles from the Delaware River and thirty-six miles short of the northwest corner of Maryland, their Indian escort left them, and

they abandoned their work. It was completed many years afterward by other surveyors.

Mason and Dixon did their work with the utmost care. Through the forests they cut a "vista" eight feet wide, and set up a stone at the end of each mile. Every fifth stone was larger than the others, and had on the north side the arms of Thomas and Richard Penn, and on the south face the arms of Frederick Lord Baltimore. One of these is preserved in Baltimore by the Maryland Historical Society, and some yet stand in their original places and are cared for by the authorities. The intermediate stones are smaller and have the letter "P" on the north and "M" on the south face. These stones were not erected west of Sideling Hill, a ridge near the boundary between Washington and Allegany counties. They were hauled as far as the neighborhood of Fort Frederick, in Washington County, and it was found impossible to carry them farther through the mountains. Some of these abandoned stones, it is said, still remain in the neighborhood where they were left, having been utilized in buildings. West of Sideling Hill the line was marked by piles of stone and earth.

The removal of many of the historic landmarks has left the boundary line between Maryland and Pennsylvania in doubt in places, and it is to remedy this, as well as to perpetuate the historic line, that the legislature has provided for this resurvey.